

that even the best translations often have their problems. While the Bible was given by inspiration, its translation and copying was done by mere imperfect men.

Even the King James Version, so long revered, has its problems. For example:

James 1:31, 33 - Should read “*baptizing in water*” rather than “*with water*” as the KJV has it. The ASV renders the verse correctly.

Acts 12:4 - One of the most glaring errors of the KJV is this one. The verse should read: “*Passover*” rather than “Easter.”

The real danger we face in choosing a Bible is when we put our trust in books that really aren’t Bibles at all but are mere paraphrases of earlier Bibles, or are ones that are agenda driven. These Bibles present more trouble than they are worth. Among the so-called “Bibles” in this category are: The *Jerusalem Bible* (1965); the *NIV* (1978); *Good News Bible* (1976); *Contemporary English Version* (1995); *The Living Bible* (1971); “*The Message*” (2002).

Bibles that are produced by denominations to support their doctrines include: *The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* (Jehovah’s Witnesses); *Catholic Bibles* (Often translations of the Latin Vulgate with Apocrypha included.) Among these are: *The Jerusalem Bible*; *New American Bible* (not to be confused with the New American Standard Version which is a more literal word-for-word translation). Alexander Campbell produced his own translation of the New Testament called “*The Living Oracles*” in 1826 and was roundly criticized for doing so. The world didn’t need a one-man translation of the Bible.

The number of Bibles available for you to read is mind-boggling. Choose carefully by being informed. Read up on the translation you are considering for your study Bible. You won’t be helped by a Bible that regularly changes the meaning of words, phrases, or which leaves out entire verses in order to push a denominational or social agenda.

Bibles that do not accurately translate the words given to man by God cannot help you understand the truth. They can only weaken your faith.



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BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

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You need to be aware that not all Bibles are the same. A Bible should be an accurate translation of the Hebrew and Greek scriptures, but some aren’t translations at all. Some Bibles merely paraphrase a respected Bible like the *King James Version*, while others mistranslate verses in favor of one human creed or another.

There are several methods of translation when it comes to Bibles.

- There is “**Formal Equivalence**,” which is the direct word-for-word translation method. *The American Standard Version* is this type of translation.
- Then there is “**Dynamic Equivalence**,” which is concerned with readability as much as with word-for-word accuracy. *The King James*

Version is this kind of translation.

- Finally, there is “**Paraphrase**” which merely restates in more modern language what an existing Bible says. *The Living Bible* is a paraphrase. Instinctually, Christians should crave a Bible that they can be confident is as near as possible to the wording of the original manuscripts of the. When you depart too far from a literal translation of the Bible you run the risk of allowing doctrinal errors into your thinking.

The very popular *NIV* (New International Version) is a mix of paraphrase and dynamic equivalence translation. This method has allowed errors to creep into the NIV. For example, in Galatians 5:19, the NIV has this wording in the original 1978 edition: “*The acts of the sinful*

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nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like....” The correct wording should be: “*the works (or acts) of the flesh are evident....*” The sinful nature of man is a Calvinistic concept not a Biblical one (see: Ezekiel 18:18-20), so the NIV tries to sell it with a tricky “translation.” However, Paul was clearly teaching that sin comes from carnal appetite (James 1:14-15), not a sinful nature that people supposedly inherited from Adam.

Some modern so-called “Bibles” abandon the idea of translation altogether in favor of promoting a social agenda. For example a new so-called “translation” has arrived on the market called “The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation.” Here is what the Inclusive Bible has in Genesis 1:26-27 - “*Then God said: Let us make humankind in our image, to be like us....Humankind was created as God’s reflection: in the divine image God created them; male and female God made them.*” You see the point don’t you? The makers of this Bible want to eliminate all masculine references to people or to God. This Bible would be popular with feminists of today.

Then there is the “Queen James Bible” (published in 2012) which, as you might guess, is meant to make homosexuality seem Biblical and righteous (ISBN #0615724531 in case you want to see it for yourself). In key Bible passages which openly and clearly condemn homosexuality as sin, this so-called “Bible” changes the language to make the sin one of sexual promiscuity (as opposed to “loving” gay sex) or a part of pagan idolatry (which even gays apparently feel is sinful). Here is their wording of Romans 1:26-27 - “*Their women did change their natural use into what is against nature: and likewise also the men, left of the natural use of the woman, burned in ritual lust toward one another. Men with men working that which is pagan and unseemly. For this reason God gave the idolaters up unto vile affections, receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.”*

In First Corinthians Paul condemned homosexuality and sodomy as sins which will bar one from the kingdom of heaven (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). But, in the Queen James Bible, the publishers decided to leave out any mention of homosexuals and sodomites and replace the sin with mere moral weakness and promiscuity: “*Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived, neither*

fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor morally weak, nor promiscuous, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”

This horrendous, blasphemous volume further changed the sin of “*defiling themselves with men*” to simply “defiling themselves” (1 Timothy 1:10). Also, in the reference to Sodom and Gomorrah, the sinners went after “nonhuman flesh” rather than the “*strange flesh*” of homosexuality (Jude 1:7).

These grotesque examples of fake Bible-making illustrate the reason why you and I should want a correct translation possible. We want the actual words and doctrines that were given by inspiration of God (2 Peter 1:20-21; Ephesians 3:3-4; Galatians 1:11-12).

A challenge to Bible translators is that as time passes, the languages of men (the vernacular) changes, and this warrants new periodic translations which properly reflect the current language of men. The American Standard Version, for example was published in 1901. It was viewed as a needed update of the English Revised Version of 1881. American English had changed significantly enough from that of Elizabethan English that a new translation was warranted.

For many years the ASV was

considered the choice Bible for preachers who wanted to convey the literal meaning of Hebrew and Greek found in the Old and New Testaments. When I first began to study the Bible to preach it in the mid-1980’s, older preachers swore by the ASV and recommended that I “cut my teeth” with it. However, nowadays, you have to hunt to find copies of the ASV in book stores. Why? The reason is that English today is different than that spoken in 1901.

The King James Version (1611) has stood the test of time for more than four hundred years. It is so revered that some people think it is the only acceptable translation available on the market. In fact, some of the more zealous of this crowd believe the KJV is the only place to find the unvarnished truth. The King James Version is indeed a good Bible, but like all translations, fault can be found in it. While the version respects the word-for-word method of translating, it also strives for beauty of language.

Word-for-word translations are a little clunky to read. Translators, have to figure out how to place the words in the proper order when doing a translation so that it is both accurate in its reflection of the Greek and Hebrew while also being as smoothly readable as possible.

It might surprise you to know